

The following information was provided by Mr. Harold Weisberg on May 23, 1992.

A *symbol informant* is in effect a part-time FBI employee who has passed a period of probation, usually about six months, and who is identified in communications by an arbitrary symbol rather than by name. The symbol consists of the FBI's abbreviation for the field office for which he informs, as BH for Birmingham, plus the arbitrary four-digit number, followed by letters indicating the kind of information provided, *C* for criminal, *S* for security, usually political information, *R* for racial, etc. Until the period of probation, which to begin with requires FBI HQ approval, is over, *P* precedes the letters indicating the kind of informer. There are special forms on which the SA running the informer, never called this because the FBI detests it, reports each contact with the informer and evaluates the information provided. Each payment, the rate also approved by FBI HQ, is also recorded. In the FBI's letter-head memoranda, known as *LHM*, in which information provided by symbol informants as well as by other sources is reported, both are represented by temporary numbers applicable to that memorandum only, like T-1, T-2, with a separate sheet attached that is removed when the memorandum is distributed. This sheet identifies the source by the symbol and ordinary sources who are not informers by name.

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